following new claims 34-37. A marked up version of the claims is present in the attached Appendix.

4. (Amended Once) A method for representing a given range of numbers with an optimized set of entries utilizing wildcards, the given range having a beginning number and an ending number, wherein the given range includes a first sub-range, a second sub-range, a third sub-range, and a fourth sub-range, the first sub-range having lower numbers than the second sub-range, which has lower numbers than the third sub-range, which has lower numbers than the fourth sub-range, the method comprising:

representing all numbers within the first sub-range as entries within the optimized set; and

representing and optimizing the second, third, and fourth sub-ranges as a plurality of entries using wildcards within the optimized set.

23. (Amended Once) A router for representing a given range of numbers with an optimized set of entries utilizing wildcards, the given range having a beginning number and an ending number, wherein the given range includes a first sub-range, a second sub-range, a third sub-range, and a fourth sub-range, the first sub-range having lower numbers than the second sub-range, which has lower numbers than the third sub-range, which has lower numbers than the fourth sub-range, the router comprising:

a memory; and

a processor coupled to the memory,

wherein at least one of the memory and the processor are adapted to provide:

representing the numbers within the first sub-range as entries within the optimized set; and

representing and optimizing the second, third, and fourth sub-ranges as a plurality of entries using wildcards within the optimized set.

29. (Amended Once) A computer readable medium containing programming instructions for representing a given range of numbers with an optimized set of entries utilizing wildcards, the given range having a beginning number and an ending number, wherein the given range includes a first sub-range, a second sub-range, a third sub-range, and a fourth sub-range, the first sub-range having lower numbers than the second sub-range, which has lower numbers than the third sub-range, which has lower numbers than the fourth sub-range, the computer readable medium comprising:

computer code for representing the numbers within the first sub-range as entries within the optimized set; and

computer code for representing and optimizing the second, third, and fourth sub-ranges as a plurality of entries using wildcards within the optimized set.

32. (Amended Once) A computer system for representing a given range of numbers with an optimized set of entries utilizing wildcards, the given range having a beginning number and an ending number, wherein the given range includes a first sub-range, a second sub-range, a third sub-range, and a fourth sub-range, the first sub-range having lower numbers than the second sub-range, which has lower numbers than the third sub-range, which has lower numbers than the fourth sub-range, the computer system comprising:

a memory; and

a processor coupled to the memory,

wherein at least one of the memory and the processor are adapted to provide:

representing the numbers within the first sub-range as entries within the optimized set; and

representing and optimizing the second, third, and fourth sub-ranges as a plurality of entries using wildcards within the optimized set.

34. (New)   A method for representing a given range of numbers with an optimized set of entries utilizing wildcards, the given range having a beginning number and an ending number, wherein the given range includes a plurality of sub-ranges, the method comprising:

representing all numbers within a first sub-range of the given range as entries within the optimized set; and

representing and optimizing each of a plurality of sub-ranges, other than the first sub-range, of the given range as a plurality of entries using wildcards within the optimized set.

35.   (New) A computer system for representing a given range of numbers with an optimized set of entries utilizing wildcards, the given range having a beginning number and an ending number, wherein the given range includes a plurality of sub-ranges, the computer system comprising:

a memory; and

a processor coupled to the memory,

wherein at least one of the memory and the processor are adapted to provide: